

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, January 14, 2018*

YEAR B - SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Welcome, everyone, on this 2nd Sunday of the season of Epiphany. Our first reading from the Apocryphon of James makes a number of interesting points. Throughout this whole work we see Jesus alternating between building up the faith and confiden of his disciples and knocking down their prideful ego. he tells them to "understand Knowledge, Love, Life, and no one will persecute you and no one will oppress you other than yourselves." The narrator, who is ostensibly James, then says: "When we heard this we were delighted. We had become bloomy because of what he said earlier." But then he immediately goes on to say: "But when he saw us happy, he said, 'Shame on you who are in need of an advocat. Shame on you who stand in need of grace. Blessings will be on those who have spoken out and acquired grace for themselves.'"

In other words, Jesus was not instructing them in Knowledge, Love, and Life in order to make them happy or content, he was instructing them so that they might seek out and discover this happiness for themselves. It is not that he does not want them to be happy; but he doesn't want them happy merely because of the overpowering and intoxicating presence of his own overflowing grace. For such happiness is fleeting. It is a quite common phenomenon that students will experience a temporary enlightenment or exalted state in the presence of an adept. How much more so must this have been the case in the presence of the Master of Masters! Jesus concludes this passage by telling them: "Belssings on the one who has seen oneself as a fourth one in heaven." In other words, he is to increase their knowledge and their connectedness with divinity to the point that they become divine themselves; true co-heirs to the Kingdom of God; worthy to sit in the presence of the very Trinity itself.

But this admonishment was disproportionately disheartening. James realtes: "When we heard this we became sad. But when he saw that we were sad, he said, 'I say this to you that you may know yourselves.'" So, Jesus is once again trying to explain to them that he is neither trying to lift them up nor bring them down unduly, but simply to instruct them on the proper course. The disciples can hardly be blamed here, though; for just as one may experience a residual enlightenment in the presence of an enlightened teacher, so too will their criticisms often be felt disproportionately. This occurs because the will of the adept and the master is so much more powerful than that of the student. But as the initiate learns to hone the will on the way to adepthood, the words of the Masters will begin to take on their true meaning and inportance. That is why the words of Jesus are a comfort and an admonishment to the psychics, but a wise and dispassionate instruction to the pneumatics. But the pneumatics are not without their admonishments as well, for Jesus warns here: "Do not be proud because of the light that enlightens. Rather, act toward yourselves as I myself have towards you." Let us contemplate these words.